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THE
O C C A S I O N
OF THE
DEARNESS of PROVISIONS,
AND THE
DISTRESS of the POOR:
WITH

Proposals for remedying the Calamity,

Offered to the Consideration of the Public:

WHEREIN

The Policy of the Bounty given upon the
Exportation of Corn, the Inclosing of
Commons, and Enlarging of Farms, are
impartially considered.

With some Remarks on a late Pamphlet, intituled,

A Letter to a Member of Parliament,
on the present Distresses of the Poor.

By a MANUFACTURER.

L O N D O N :

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THE
O C C A S I O N
OF THE
DEARNESS of PROVISIONS, &c.

THE question, “ Whence arises the
“ dearness of provisions in Britain,
“ and the distress and discontent of the
“ poor consequential thereon,” which has
deservedly engaged the consideration of the
legislature, is of so much importance, that
I think it the duty of every honest man, who
believes he has traced out the causes, to lay
them before the public ; and this is both my
reason and apology for publishing the fol-
lowing considerations : For altho’ much has
been written upon the subject ; yet nothing
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that has come under my notice, has (as I conceive) set it in a proper national light.

I consider that Great-Britain, from the happy variety and fruitfulness of its soil, together with the agreeable changes and temperature of its air, is eminently productive of most of the necessaries of life, and many valuable materials of manufacture and commerce :

That the labour of the husbandman is no where so seldom blasted with the extremes of heat and cold, moisture and dryness; nor the care of the breeder of cattle so rarely disappointed; our sheep are more fruitful, supported with more ease, and produce more weighty and more valuable fleeces of wool, than those of any country we know; our mountains abound with coals, iron, lead, tin, and other valuable materials for use and commerce; and our forests and uncultivated grounds (many of them) with timber in great perfection :



That

That manufactures, trade and commerce, have made the country in many places populous, and a moderate proportion of the people rich; and having furnished employment and wages, which have yielded a subsistence with a reasonable industry (notwithstanding an amazing load of taxes) have kept the working-people easy and chearful :

That the first and great end of government is, the safety and happiness of the people in general; and that in a country like this, supported upon the three grand pillars of national wealth and power, husbandry, manufactures and commerce; the great art is to balance their seemingly clashing interests, in such a manner that none of them may be oppressed; as being all eminently useful and necessary to each other, and to the public weal :

That manufacture, an invaluable acquisition, which ever brings populousness, power and riches along with it, and which ought in a peculiar manner to become the care of

the legislature (as being the greatest encouragement of the cultivation of the land, by furnishing a ready money market for the produce at home, and the only substantial support of profitable commerce abroad, by furnishing articles of exchange to make a balance in our favour) is not peculiar to this country, but is easily transplanted to such, where a better encouragement, and a more easy subsistence, invites it :

That it is not the interest of the landed gentlemen to keep up the prices of the produce of the land above a prudent mediocrity in this country ; as in that case our manufacturers, who have no dependence but upon their skill and industry, must either have their wages advanced, so as to ruin our foreign trade for manufactures, by rendering them too dear ; or, thro' the impossibility of gaining a living with a reasonable industry, will be obliged to migrate, where a more friendly policy or happier circumstances attend. And I am sincerely afraid, that a variety of unhappy causes concur to realize it
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here at this time ; it being evident, that our stock of cattle has been for years past, and still is, gradually decreasing ; our sheep and our wool, indispensably necessary to the subsistence of a great part of our people, precipately lessening ; our corn, and all its substitutes, thro' the transportation of a good part of the last year's crop, and the defects of this, likely to be scarce and dear, notwithstanding the late temporary expedients provided in the article of corn ; and in short, all the necessities of life yielding a melancholy prospect of being, for many years to come, too dear for the wages of manufactory for our foreign trade to support. This gives too good ground to fear, that the patience of the most sober and industrious of our manufacturers will be exhausted ; and that, by an almost general migration thither, North America will become populous by the ruin of the mother country ; it being an undoubted matter of fact, that multitudes have their attention turned to this object ; many have already engaged and are treating for that purpose ; and there seems nothing wanting, but

but their being exposed to the same hardships a little longer, and a favourable account of the success of their acquaintance, going and gone there, to excite them more generally to it.

Having premised these things, I shall next observe, that through a variety of causes, (principally, as I apprehend, owing to a want of a closer attention to the national interest in general, and the mistaken policy of those whose stations qualify them to redress the national grievances) the necessaries of life are gradually become too dear, and the ability of purchasing them lessened; our foreign trade for manufactures declining, and wages of consequence; the working-people and manufacturers, reduced to great necessities, are discontented, and their grievances become a national object.

That the first and capital occasion of this calamity, as I conceive, is the bounty given upon the exportation of corn; which, by encouraging the growth of it, so as to encroach

croach upon the other necessaries of life, and giving a large premium for sending the increased quantity of that article to foreigners, incontestably tends to render the whole scarce and dear. But I am not ignorant that before I proceed further, I have a vulgar error to remove, viz. that giving a premium for carrying our corn to foreigners, is a necessary encouragement to agriculture, and makes it more plentiful and cheap than otherwise it would be; a paradox which, supported by the authority of an account published by bishop Fleetwood, in his *Chronicon Preciosum*, of the prices of wheat annually, from the year 1646 to 1705 inclusive, has obtained almost general credit, and been made use of and admitted as a conclusive argument in favour of the bounty; because, say they, the bishop's account shews that wheat was cheaper after the bounty took place than before; therefore the bounty produced that effect.

But this conclusion will appear erroneous and unfair, to those who will attend to the follow-

following circumstances; viz. that the bishop's account begins in 1646, during the civil wars; and his first twenty years go down to the year 1666, in which period the discouragements upon agriculture must have been so great, on account of the unsettled state of the nation, through the violence of war and party disputes, that it is surprizing it was not much dearer, and can be put upon no fair comparison with the times after the bounty took place.

His second twenty years contain most part of the remaining reign of Charles the second; during whose weak and impolitic government, the violence of persecution, inflicted on many sober, conscientious and industrious people on one hand, and drunkenness, debauchery and discontent on the other, were great discouragements of the industry necessary to render that article cheap; yet the bishop's account clearly shews us, that wheat was dearer by 17 s. 9 d. farthing per quarter, upon an average, during the first ten years after the bounty took place, than it was during

ring the ten years preceding it, accounting from the end of the year 1690, when it may be supposed it might begin to have influence. I go back the ten years preceding, only on account of their being the most tranquil and favourable to industry, of any part of the preceding long period the bishop's account includes, thro' the relaxation of persecution during most of the time; and for that reason fittest to be compared with those after the bounty took place, in order to decide the question, whether it made corn dearer, or cheaper. For notwithstanding the latter part of the reign of Charles and that of James the second cannot be put in equal competition with those of William and Mary, for encouragements to agriculture; yet the bishop's account (which has been referred to and admitted as matter of fact, to prove that the bounty made wheat cheaper in England) proves incontestably that it made it dearer by 17s. 9d. farthing per quarter, as observed above, taking the medium price for ten years immediately preceding and succeeding it; a striking evidence this of our credulity and

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inattention to things of greatest national importance; and a demonstration, so far as the subject is capable of it, that the bounty, upon this plea of its making corn cheaper, is indefensible: for I think no person of common candour can plead, that the prices of corn from 1646 to 1680) which includes those unhappy times of civil war, distraction and persecution, wherein the subjects could often have little assurance of reaping the fruit of their labours) can be put upon a fair comparison with those after the bounty took effect; when industry might be said (compared with the former times) to sit under its own vine and under its own fig-tree, and none to make it afraid.

This being an indubitable fact (upon their own principles) is conclusive against the advocates for the bounty, who have generally taken it for granted (upon the bishop's authority) that its influence was to make corn cheaper than otherwise it would have been in this country. But we see, on the contrary, that after it took effect, wheat advanced extremely,

tremely, viz. no less than 11. os. 6d. per quarter, taking only the nine years preceding the bounty, against the nine years immediately succeeding it.

It may be objected to this conclusion, that corn has been as cheap some years since the bounty took place, as within the period produced; and that there is reason to believe that the bounty contributed to it, by occasioning a greater quantity to be sown. But this objection will lose its force, if we consider, that this has only happened when corn in general has been cheap throughout Europe; and that as corn is carried abroad at the expence of about 1s. 6d. per quarter, and could not find a vent abroad (with the bounty of 5s. subtracted from the market prices, at the cheapest markets in this country) sufficient to advance it to a common moderate price, this is a clear evidence of it; as well as that, in those times of general plenty, if no bounty had been allowed, and considerably less corn had been sown, it would not have advanced with us to above

a reasonable price betwixt the corn-grower and the consumer, which is ever the most desirable situation; an extreme on one hand generally producing an extreme on the other, and both of them are injurious to the public in a collective capacity: And it seems plain to me; that corn would not be sent abroad cheaper than it is raised here at some periods, so as to occasion a public loss, and often the ruin of adventurers, by their being encouraged to send it to a losing market abroad, on the one hand, nor be spirited away, so as to make a dearth at home, on the other, if the bounty was taken away.

I observe bishop Fleetwood has not given us the prices of wheat from the year 1562 to 1646 inclusive; because, as he says, “ the
 “ prices were generally fixed for some years
 “ before, and many years that followed, at
 “ 8s. per quarter (6os. to a pound of silver,
 “ nearly the same as now) betwixt the land-
 “ lord and tenant; and that although the
 “ prices varied, (viz. that thro’ a dearth in
 “ 1574, excessive transportation in 1587, 94
 “ and

“ and 95, and great rains in 1596 and 97, it
 “ was exceeding dear) yet he says, that taking
 “ the medium price for 20 years together,
 “ it might be equal enough;” from which I
 would only observe, that as, during the long
 reign of queen Elizabeth, the medium price
 of wheat was no more than 8s. per quarter
 our money, the plea of the bounty being ne-
 cessary to encourage agriculture, with the
 view of making corn cheaper, is prepos-
 terous.

Having, as I think, clearly demonstrated
 the fallacy of this principal argument, ad-
 vanced in favour of the bounty upon corn,
 I shall now proceed to shew that it is chiefly
 owing to the bad policy of the bounty, that
 our sheep, wool, horned cattle, pork, butter,
 cheese, &c. as well as corn, are gradually
 become exceeding scarce and dear; which
 being all necessary to the prosperity and ex-
 istence of the people of this country, de-
 mands the utmost attention and redress.
 Because, by giving a partial encourage-
 ment to the growing of corn, and sending
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the increased quantity to foreigners, the attention of the husbandman is improperly drawn from those other more beneficial production; our sheep-walks, pastures, and commons, the wonted nurseries of them, are precipitately converted into arable land and grazing; the small farmers, the breeders and nurfers of our sheep and horned cattle, the raisers of our bacon, butter, cheese, poultry, &c. are banished from their native soil in many places, to make room for the rapacious hand of an all-grasping neighbour, whose grand object is mostly tillage; the increased quantity of corn, at the national expence of 15l. per cent. sent to foreigners, and a premium given him for helping, with the assistance of a more inhospitable landlord, to depopulate the land, and thrust a sword into the bowels of his country; but “ woe to
 “ them that lay house to house, and field to
 “ field, until there be no place, that they
 “ may dwell alone in the midst of the
 “ earth;” and a melancholy truth it is, that the too long prevailing disposition of our great landed men, of turning off
 their

their small tenants, and enlarging their farms, is advancing the ruin of this country by enormous strides : For in consequence of this it is that populous villages are converted into two or three farm-houses ; the produce for national subsistence diminishing ; wool, the grand source of population and wealth, lessening apace ; and in short, the evident tendency of the prevailing policy of this age, is to depopulate the farming country, for want of farms, and the manufacturing towns and villages, for want of wool, the material and means of employment and subsistence. And indeed it seems evident, that if a seasonable remedy is not applied to this grievance, the great corn-growers on the one hand, and the great graziers on the other, (like Pharaoh's lean kine) will eat up most of the breeding ground and stock of cattle in the kingdom, and reduce themselves to this dilemma ; the graziers will not be able to procure cattle to feed, the corn-growers will want a market for corn at home, and the state ability to give them bounties for sending it abroad.

If

If we attend to the history of mankind, we shall find that countries were fruitful in proportion as they were populous; and our own observation will confirm it to us, in comparing the populous parts of this island with those less inhabited; the earth, a fruitful mother, repaying the extraordinary industry of her sons with a double increase. This authorizes me to affirm, that *ten* farmers, with their families, will give a thousand acres of land a more thorough cultivation, and more manure, compost, dung, &c. than *one* family; and have it in their power to embrace better and more seasonable opportunities of plowing, sowing, weeding, reaping, housing, or stacking, &c. (all matters of great importance to bring forth and secure a plentiful crop) and will produce inconceivably more sheep, wool, horned cattle, bacon, butter, cheese, poultry, &c. (all of which are things extremely necessary to the public, and much dependent upon the nursery and care of masters and mistresses of families) besides as great a quantity of corn, and by employing themselves and servants (during unsea-

unseasonable or improper intervals for working in the land) with some other profitable business or handicraft, and the women and children in spinning, &c. they will not only support their families comfortably, but make a greater consumption, pay more taxes, and at least make the thousand acres of land produce a double increase, and be of double value to the public, besides the addition of strength and security arising from it to the country.

The same unhappy influence and bad policy has also encouraged, among our great landed men, a too hasty and general inclosure of commons and common fields, &c. as well as induced many of them, of late years, to procure a clause in many acts, subjecting those that put sheep upon the new inclosures to severe penalties for 9 or 11 years, upon the trifling consideration of preserving their quick-set hedges from being damaged by them; an inconvenience too, which a very trifling additional expence would prevent; by which means incredible numbers of sheep have been destroyed; and of which I can exhibit no better

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an idea, than that one single act for inclosure has destroyed eleven thousand sheep, all breeding stock, from off one ground, within the county of York; and, of consequence, has taken away the employment of six hundred manufacturers; and, in the nine years, will prevent eighty thousand sheep from coming to the shambles; but probably within that time may draw twenty thousand pounds out of the public treasury in bounties, for sending the produce of corn abroad, and wounding this country in the most sensible part. A barbarous policy this! and such a one as our forefathers of any preceding generation, for two centuries past, would have looked upon with resentment; but now unhappily adopted as a laudable and prudent measure in this. They encouraged and supported our woollen manufactory with the wisest laws human prudence could suggest, from a clear conviction that the prosperity of the nation was connected with it, and their policy has been justified by fact: It having attained (in consequence of those measures) a degree of strength and opulence unknown

known to former ages. But the present generation, from a short-sighted and mistaken self-interest, void of generosity, humanity, or the love of our country, is in a likely way to destroy in a few years this invaluable acquisition, which it has been the work of ages to raise to its present magnitude and perfection. Thus (according to the proverb) “ the *wise* woman buildeth her house, but “ the *foolish* plucketh it down with her “ hands.”

The advocates for the bounty amuse and impose upon the public with another mistake, viz. that it was not only necessary to agriculture (which was in its infant or imperfect state, and wanted such an encouragement) but was also intended to make corn cheaper for home consumption. But matter of fact here also contradicts their assumption, corn having been cheap for a series of years preceding the bounty; and at the very time the act was passed, wheat was no more than 1l. 10s. per quarter (see the bishop's account). On the contrary, it seems to have been an

expedient to reconcile the landed gentlemen to the land tax, which took place about the same time, and was intended (by forcing a market for corn abroad) to advance the price of it at home; and so long as other provisions continued moderately cheap, there was some reason for the public to sit easy under the fluctuating prices of corn, occasioned by it. But experience has wofully taught us, that it has had too great an effect, by the extraordinary dearth of provisions in general, the threatening prospect of the calamity increasing upon us, and that we cannot spare so great an outlet of the national produce of provisions as it occasions, in the present state of this kingdom; as, in consequence of it, our manufacturers and working people, our lesser tradesmen, and many of their superiors, are reduced to greater difficulties than consist with the good of the country.

We are told with great assurance, that the bounty makes corn cheap in Britain, and that this cheapness encourages the growth of it; that the withdrawing it will make it
scarce

scarce and dear; and yet that this scarcity and dearness will discourage the growth of it: Thus we are to believe that our farmers are either so stupid, as to act by the rule of contraries in an affair of this importance; or such enemies to their country, and so much in love with foreigners, that they will be more industrious, and more desirous of growing corn at 32s. per quarter, provided the dealer is enabled by the bounty to deliver it 5s. cheaper to them, than they would be with 40s. per quarter from their neighbours and countrymen, if foreigners had not that unjust preference,

But it is no new thing for a bad cause to lead its advocates into absurdities and contradictions: nothing being more certain, than that our farmers are honest fellows, and will pursue their own obvious immediate interest; and that their interest, if left to its proper influence, will regulate betwixt the production of corn and other produce, in such a manner as will tend to the interest of the kingdom; and it is remarkable, that if the
bounty

bounty did not spirit it away improperly, we are in less danger of wanting corn in Britain, than any other produce of the land. Pasture grounds are with great facility turned into corn ; and in case of a real, or expected scarcity of that article, during the latter part of winter or spring, the attention of the farmer to his most immediate and obvious interest will, in a few months, (with the blessing of providence) bring us such a plenty of oats, barley, beans, and pease, (which are the constant household bread-corn of a considerable part of our people) as will prevent the worst effects of a dearth in Britain. But reducing arable into pasture lands, and recruiting an exhausted stock of sheep and cattle upon them, so as to bring things to a prudent equilibrium, will require a series of years. And notwithstanding we are told with great assurance, that if the bounty is repealed, the farmers will grow no corn but for their families use ; yet, for our comfort, nothing is more obvious and certain, than that the lands in England, which are incapable of being managed to equal profit any other way,

way, are more than sufficient to produce a plentiful stock of corn for the consumption of the nation.

These, which are the general arguments advanced in favour of the bounty upon corn, (and which I think I have proved to be indisputably founded upon a false representation of facts, as well as repugnant to common sense, and implying a contradiction) are taken for granted, in a late florid, but empty declamation, intituled, "A letter to a member of parliament, on the present distress of the poor, &c. by I. W." which offering nothing new on the subject, I should not have animadverted upon, if I had not found in it the most unjust invectives against, and violent insult upon, the manufacturing and labouring poor I have ever seen: One would imagine that the author is the disappointed candidate of some city or borough, and had neither seen nor known any thing of the great body of people he is thus illiberally abusing, but what he had learnt from his quondam favourites, the leaders of the im-
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portant mob of freemen he has been courting; but that, tired and disgusted with his late idle, dissolute, and troublesomely incroaching friends, (made so perhaps by the seducing arts of corruption, which these unhappy people are exposed to) he had weakly and ignorantly estimated the disposition and manners of all the manufacturing people in England by them: A conclusion equally cruel and unjust; nothing being more evident than that our manufacturers, taking them collectively, thro' the whole process of manufactory, (excepting indeed some of the freemen of cities and boroughs corrupted as before observed) are as sober, industrious, and frugal people, as any other class in the kingdom; and that, when provisions are moderate, many of them bring up large families reputably, and save money; not to mention a remarkable truth, that a considerable part of the most thriving and industrious master manufacturers and merchants in the kingdom, have risen from among this set of people.

Most

Most of the advocates for the bounty, conscious that an openly professed design of making provisions dear could not meet with encouragement from the generality of this nation, have artfully disguised it; and, by absurdly pleading that the bounty made corn cheaper, have endeavoured to make the public easy under it. But this gentleman and some others have divulged the secret, and boldly tell us, "that it is repugnant to the
 " manufacturing part of the public to re-
 " duce provisions to too moderate a price;
 " that the poor of this country, however
 " they may exclaim at the dearness of pro-
 " visions, are nevertheless no way benefitted,
 " when they can support their families at
 " the most reasonable rates."

It is true, he does not tell us what is "a
 " too moderate price, and the most reason-
 " able rates;" but if we may be allowed to collect his meaning from the general tenor of his letter, it is, that provisions are *cheap* at present; and that it is the interest of the public that they should never be *cheaper*. He

mentions, indeed, the complaints and distress of the poor, but in the way of insult, rather than commiseration; and his expedient, although a desirable object, is inadequate, and too remote for the present exigence.

But passing by his long detail of absurd abusive rant about “ the manufacturers
 “ growing idle when provisions are reasonable; his St. Mondays and St. Tuesdays;
 “ and their demanding as much for four
 “ days work as will discharge not only their
 “ week’s maintainance, but their idleness
 “ and dissipation; that unless they are allowed extraordinary wages they will not
 “ work at all, thus occasioning the advance of
 “ the prices of goods; that the nation, injured by their general idleness, suffers
 “ afresh, by our merchants being underfold
 “ in all the markets in Europe through it;”
 with, &c. &c. of undeserved invectives against those most useful but at present unhappy people; who, in general, I may I believe with truth affirm, are the most laborious and ingenious people in the universe,

verse, and that the country which wantonly and designedly throws unnecessary hardships upon them, is unworthy of the inestimable advantages arising from them ; —I shall seriously come to the point in question : Are provisions cheap, or even reasonable ? Do the high prices of corn, beef, mutton, butter, cheese, milk, and every necessary of life, which are almost double (taken collectively) to what we and our fathers have heretofore known them, come under the idea of *cheapness* with this gentleman ? Or are the wages of manufactory (which by the way are not advanced) without keeping St. Monday and St. Tuesday ; or even if our manufacturers, by working extraordinary hours, make the six into eight days hard and close labour within the week (which many of them, rather than fall upon the parish, constantly endure) *sufficient* to subsist their families comfortably ? And is this, with I. W. a desirable situation, or such as they have not good reason to complain of, and a right to be relieved from ?

But I may be asked here, what is a moderate price of provisions? I answer, that wheat, from the present price of 6s. or 6s. 6d. reduced to 4s. or 4s. 6d. per bushel upon an average, and other provisions reduced from the present high prices in proportion, would, I think, be a fair price, in the present state of things, betwixt the farmer and consumer; as it would yield the corn-grower, the breeder of cattle, and the grazier, &c. sufficient profit, enable them to pay greater rents than are given in any nation in Europe, and allow our manufacturers to obtain a comfortable subsistence, with a reasonable industry, upon wages that would enable us to go to market abroad upon equal terms, at least, with our neighbours and rivals in trade.

But by a strange kind of argumentation, this gentleman and some of the advocates for the bounty tell us, that it is prudent and necessary to keep provisions dear in England, in order that our manufacturers may work cheap; a paradox that does equal credit to their judgment and their humanity. It is

noways surprizing that self-interest should cover itself with artifice and imposture ; but it is truly wonderful that the public should indolently acquiesce in a measure that is supported by falshood, and is in itself repugnant to the common sense of mankind.

This gentleman with great assurance tells us, that “ for twenty years before this bounty was established by the wisdom of government, corn (i. e. wheat) was never less than 5 s. per bushel :” whereas it is evident from bishop Fleetwood’s account (the authenticity of which was never disputed) in his *Chronicon Preciosum*, and in his conclusion on the article of corn, that in the markets near London (which he informs us were higher by 9 s. per quarter, than the medium price thro’ the kingdom) wheat was no more than 3 s. 2 d. to 4 s. 3 d. per bushel (suppose with half the above deduction 2 s. 8 d. to 3 s. 9 d. per bushel) within that period, for several years together ; and talks of the enormous load of taxes placed on almost every thing manufactured for exportation. Are we to
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suppose that I. W. is so ignorant as not to know these are mistakes? Or does he, like the bottle-conjurer, expect, from the unthinking credulity of the public on the subject before us, that it is ready to believe every bold assertion, though void of truth, and contrary to reason?

On the whole, I think it is evident that the advocates for the bounty, in their arguments for its making provisions cheap, are playing upon the public with an irony, and mean just the contrary of what they say; and that when they inadvertently plead for the dearth of provisions and continuance of the bounty, as things synonymous, they only argue consistently.

Having in the preceding pages clearly shewn, that the bounty was not at first granted by the legislature with a view to the encouragement of agriculture, on account of the scarcity or dearth of corn, or with the design of making it more plentiful and cheap; but, on the contrary, that it
seems

seems to have been intended to advance the price of it (wheat being at that very time no more than 30s, suppose 25s, per quarter (see the bishop's account) and that it had that effect to a very great degree, it being evident that wheat was 17s. 9d. farthing per quarter dearer the ten years succeeding than it was the ten years preceding;—that it has had a like effect now, by encouraging a too general inclosure of commons and enlargement of farms, in such a manner that the national production of cattle, sheep, wool, butter, cheese, bacon, &c. (as well as corn) is greatly lessened by it, and rendered dearer than consists with the national interest;—that in the present state of Great-Britain, so great an outlet of the produce of our lands as the bounty occasions, cannot be spared;—that we are in less danger of wanting corn than any other produce of provisions, if the bounty did not spirit it away improperly;—that it is but too evident the calamity is likely to increase upon us, every resource of cattle, sheep, and wool, &c. that is within our reach, being greatly

exhausted;—and that if a timely remedy is not provided, the consequence will be ruinous to this country, as it will unavoidably force our manufacturers and working people to North-America, or to parts where a better policy will provide them employment and a comfortable subsistence;—I shall proceed to shew the bad policy of the bounty in another interesting light.

It being, I think, evident, that the produce of the lands of Great-Britain, taken collectively, is not more than sufficient to supply its consumption, and that it pays more for things imported, which our lands might raise to greater profit than corn (as beef, pork, butter, timber, hides, tallow, corn at some seasons, and hemp and flax; which last, employing more hands, would be abundantly more beneficial) than it receives for corn exported;—it must therefore be a great loss to the nation to send corn abroad, with a discount of 12 to 15 per cent. from the current price here, and be obliged to give foreigners a price equal to the full rent of
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our land, and the labour and profit of cultivation, for those other articles which are indispensably necessary to the public weal : And if it be allowed, that to save 100l. from going out of the nation is better than bringing only 85l. into it, it is certainly the interest of the nation that the bounty be repealed. For unless its advocates will say, that the farmers will not cultivate their lands as their obvious interest leads ; they must allow, that in proportion as less corn is exported, the production of the other necessities of life, and more profitable materials of commerce abroad, will be attended to : And, divested of that impolitic and injurious influence ; that the attention of the farmer to his interest will bring us that general plenty, which, as hinted before, kind providence, through the variety and fruitfulness of our soil, and the agreeable changes and temperature of our air, has rendered our country eminently productive of. Accidents may render a particular article dear ; but a few vibrations will bring it to its proper equilibrium ; and corn will undoubtedly find a market abroad, when-

ever a price offers that will pay for the expence of cultivation, &c. And if we may calculate for the future by a series of years past, that will be as often, and to as great an extent, as will consist with the interest of the nation collectively ;—instead of a losing, we shall enjoy a profitable trade in corn. And if, upon the whole, considerably less corn is exported, yet a greater balance will come into the kingdom, by the increase of manufactory on the one hand; and by the greater supply of provisions, and many necessary articles of manufactory being raised at home, which we have been obliged to purchase from abroad, on the other.

It is evidently injurious to the nation to send off, at a low price, through the influence of the bounty, often the very corn which would be otherwise sold abroad at a good price without it; and which sometimes exhausts our stock so greatly, as to lay us under the necessity of purchasing great quantities of it again at an exorbitant advanced price (50 per cent. at some periods). And it being
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remarkable that wheat has frequently been sent abroad for a few months after harvest at 32s. per quarter, and has advanced gradually before May to 48s. per quarter, and the demand continued so great, that the whole might have been sold at the advanced price, if the bounty had not spirited it away too soon; it leaves us no room to hesitate in concluding, that the bounty is an impolitic and ruinous measure. And indeed it is wonderful, that in all moderately plentiful years, our natural enemies, and false friends abroad, do not take the advantage of our bad policy in this important article, to engross greater quantities of our corn than the nation can subsist without, oblige us to open our ports or starve, and, with a certainty of extraordinary profit to themselves, distress this country in the most cruel manner.

In the preceding pages, which are the result of a serious, deliberate, extensive, and impartial enquiry, I have traced out, as I conceive, the occasion of the dearness of provisions in Great-Britain; in the course of

which I have been painfully alarmed with an account from all parts of the kingdom, that the stock of sheep, wool, and horned cattle, have been for a series of years gradually exhausting; and that the breeding stock in England, and those in Scotland and Wales, (the dernier resort of our graziers) are so greatly thinned already, as exhibits a melancholy prospect of an extravagant dearth and a great deficiency in the next year's drapes, or lean sheep and cattle for feeding: And that Ireland, which might in some degree (for a year or two at least) make up the deficiency, is too sensible of the advantages resulting from an uniform plenty of provisions, to suffer us to reap the benefit intended by the law permitting the importation of cattle from thence into this country. And I am fully convinced, that this distemper (which threatens great danger to the public) is too deeply rooted in the unhappy prevailing policy and maxims of our landed gentlemen, and has made too great a progress to yield to such little expedients as the opening our ports for corn, or withdrawing the bounty

bounty for a few months; and that it demands, and will require, the utmost exertion of the wisdom of the legislature to effect a cure.

I am sensible that no violent remedies, such as fixing the price of provisions by a law, or regulating the mode of distributing or selling them (the means in such cases generally defeating their end) are proper: But as the distemper arises from a real scarcity, which has gradually come upon us, the cure must also be gradual. And as, in tracing the course of this distemper, divers things have occurred to me which I think are most likely to be of service, I cannot but earnestly recommend them to the consideration of all those, whose stations qualify them, and whose duty it is, to apply proper remedies to it; viz.

1st. I propose that the act granting a bounty upon the exportation of corn, be repealed; as the first and grand spring of this public calamity.

2d. That

2d. That the clause in all late acts for inclosures, which inflicts a penalty upon those that put sheep upon the new inclosures, be repealed; and that in all future acts for inclosures of commons, &c. a penal clause be inserted, obliging the occupiers to keep (at least) as many sheep and horned cattle upon the ground as before. Also that in the future inclosures of commons, &c. the proprietors be obliged to keep the same number of tenements and families (at least) upon the premises as before; and that all small tenements shall enjoy with them the full proportion of land they were intitled to before.

3d. That an effectual law be provided to bring sheep, lambs, and horned cattle from Ireland, to supply our present wants; and a penalty inflicted on those that slaughter any lambs or calves in Great-Britain, suppose for nine months, after the 1st of May 1767.

4th. That

4th. That a premium be given to every farmer that plows with a major part of oxen, if he does not occupy above 150 acres of land; suppose 20s. for each.

5th. That in all plowing farms of above 150 acres, they be obliged, on proper penalties, after the 1st of March 1769, to draw one third oxen at least; and after the 1st of March 1770, to draw more oxen than horses, without the premium.

6th. That in all grazing farms of above 200 acres, the graziers be obliged to breed half as many sheep and horned cattle yearly, as they feed sheep and beeves for the shambles.

7th. That also for a limited time, till our exhausted stock of wool is recruited, a bounty be given on the importation of wool from Ireland.

These

These propositions, I am persuaded, contain hints, which in skilful hands might produce regulations that would gradually cure this grievous distemper, and stave off the impending danger. And although they might operate disagreeably to some persons, yet it is not the least recommendation of them, that they will thus affect only those who have set up an interest opposite to that of their country, and who are unnaturally feeding on its vitals: And notwithstanding they may sound harsh to many, yet if it be considered that the safety of the people is the supreme law of government, and that the present exigency requires that some vigorous measures be pursued, I believe it will be difficult to find out any other expedients, that will so expeditiously, and with so little inconvenience to the farmers in general, restore to Britain that general plenty of provisions which it heretofore has been blessed with, and its soil and situation intitle it to expect; as they would tend to deliver us from that enormous incumbrance of unprofitable cattle, which of late have eat up our land; and introduce
in

in their place a constant and plentiful supply of oxen, sheep, wool, and victuals; and oblige these depopulators of our country, the ingrossers and monopolizers of farms, from the additional care and trouble which would attend these (tho' more profitable) methods of cultivating and managing land, to be content with a reasonable share of it; to the great emolument of the farming body and the public.

I find that at several periods in the English annals, the same kind of partial influence in the great land-owners and farmers, had brought the public into like difficulties; and that the wisdom of the legislature was as often employed to enact laws (many of them less mild than these propositions) for remedying the calamity; such as obliging the owners of land to rebuild all the farm-houses they had suffered to fall to decay, restricting the farmers to the number of sheep they should keep, and confining them to the occupation of two farms at the most; with many others adapted to the exigencies of the pub-

lic, and all inforced by severe penalties; the preamble to one of which is so much descriptive of our present unhappy situation, and of the same effects produced then by the same causes, that I cannot well avoid transcribing it, by way of conclusion. viz. The 25th of Henry the VIIIth, chap. 13th.

“ **F**ORASMUCH as diverse and sundry
 “ of the king’s subjects of this realm,
 “ to whom God of his goodness hath dis-
 “ posed great plenty and abundance of move-
 “ able substance, now of late, within few
 “ years, have daily studied, practised, and in-
 “ vented ways and means how they might ac-
 “ cumulate, and gather together into few
 “ hands, as well great multitudes of farms, as
 “ great plenty of cattle, and especially sheep,
 “ putting such lands as they can get to pas-
 “ ture and not to tillage, (2) whereby they have
 “ not only pulled down churches and towns,
 “ and enhanced the old rates of the rents
 “ of the possessions of this realm; or else
 “ brought it to such excessive fines, that no
 “ poor man is able to meddle with it; but
 “ also

“ also have raised and enhanced the prices
 “ of all manner of corn, cattle, wool, pigs,
 “ geese, hens, chickens, eggs, and such
 “ other, almost double above the prices
 “ which have been accustomed; (3) by rea-
 “ son whereof a marvellous multitude and
 “ number of the people of this realm be
 “ not able to provide meat, drink, and
 “ cloaths necessary for themselves, their
 “ wives and children, but be so discouraged
 “ with misery and poverty, that they fall
 “ daily to theft, robbery, and other incon-
 “ veniencies, or pitifully die for hunger and
 “ cold: (4) And it is thought by the king’s
 “ most humble and loving subjects, that one
 “ of the greatest occasions that moveth and
 “ provoketh those greedy and covetous peo-
 “ ple so to accumulate and keep in their
 “ hands such great portions and parts of
 “ the grounds and lands of this realm, from
 “ the occupying of the poor husbandman,
 “ and so to use it in pasture, and not in til-
 “ lage, is only the great profit that cometh
 “ of sheep; which now become in a few
 “ persons hands of this realm, in respect of

“ the whole number of the king’s subjects,
 “ that some have four and twenty thousand,
 “ some twenty thousand, some ten thousand,
 “ some six thousand, some five thousand,
 “ and some more and some less: (5) By the
 “ which a good sheep for the victual, that
 “ was accustomed to be sold for * two shil-
 “ lings four-pence, or three shillings at the
 “ most, is now sold for six shillings, or five,
 “ or four shillings at the least; (6) and a stone
 “ of cloathing wool, that in some shires of
 “ the realm was accustomed to be sold for
 “ eighteen-pence or twenty-pence, is now
 “ sold for four shillings, or three shillings
 “ four-pence at the least; and in some coun-
 “ tries where it hath been sold for two shil-
 “ lings four-pence, or two shillings eight-
 “ pence, or three shillings at the most, is
 “ now sold for five shillings, or four shillings
 “ eight-pence the least, and so are raised in
 “ every part of this realm; (7) which things,
 “ thus used, be principally to the high dis-
 “ pleasure of Almighty God, to the decay of
 “ the

* A shilling at this time was worth about 15d. being
 48s. to the pound of silver.

“ the hospitality of this realm, to the dimi-
“ nishing of the king's people, and to the let-
“ of the cloth-making, whereby many poor
“ have been accustomed to be set on work ;
“ and in conclusion, if remedy be not found,
“ it may turn to the utter destruction and de-
“ solation of this realm, which God defend.”

F I N I S.



